

Giardia

WHAT IS *GIARDIA*?

Giardia is a parasite commonly found in water and can cause diarrhea, stomach cramps, bloating and weight loss.

This infection is particularly dangerous for:

- Children younger than 5 years
- Pregnant people
- People with weakened immune systems

HOW IS *GIARDIA* TRANSMITTED?

You can get sick if you swallow the *Giardia* parasite. This can happen by touching contaminated surfaces, changing diapers, caring for sick individuals or handling infected animals like cows or calves.

Other ways *Giardia* spreads:

- Eating or drinking contaminated food or water
- Traveling to areas with poor sanitation
- Coming into contact with infected poop during sex

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF *GIARDIA* INFECTION?

Symptoms vary depending on the person infected and their own medical history. Common symptoms include:

- Diarrhea
- Gas/Bloating
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Foul-smelling poop
- Fever
- Abdominal cramping

HOW DO I PREVENT *GIARDIA* INFECTION?

- Wash your hands with soap and water:
 - Before you touch food or eat
 - After you go to the bathroom or change diapers
- Use drinking water for washing hands, brushing teeth and cleaning produce
 - If safe drinking water is not available, boil the water first before use
- Avoid swallowing water from pools, hot tubs and splash pads
- Avoid swallowing water from lakes, ponds and oceans
- Be careful during sex to avoid contact with poop



Once outside the body, *Giardia* can sometimes survive for weeks or even months in environments such as water, hard surfaces and soil.

TREATMENT FOR *GIARDIA*

There are several prescription drugs that can treat *Giardia*. While anyone can get infected with *Giardia*, infants and pregnant people might be at a higher risk of dehydration due to the diarrhea caused by the illness. To avoid dehydration, it's crucial for infants and pregnant people to drink plenty of fluids when they are sick.

RETURN TO WORK GUIDELINES

People who work in settings with a high risk of spreading infections, such as:

- Restaurants
- Healthcare facilities
- Daycares

Or children who attend daycare should wait until they have been free of symptoms for 24 hours before returning.



IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE BEEN EXPOSED AND ARE SICK WITH *GIARDIA*, CONTACT YOUR PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER RIGHT AWAY!



Kentucky Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.